

Monique Varle Zmuda
355 Ferry St Apt 804
New Haven, CT

March 5, 2015

Dear Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

My name is Monique Varle Zmuda and I live in New Haven. I am here to speak in support of House Bill # 6878, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION LIABILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SERVICES FROM PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS.

I have cerebral palsy and have been on the PCA waiver program for 2 years. I can't walk; dress, bathe, or go to the bathroom by myself, and I require round-the-clock care by my PCAs and my husband. Because speaking is difficult, my husband Kenneth Varle will help read the statement that I wrote.

Being at home is better for me because I have more independence, and I can live in my own apartment with my husband. My PCAs work very hard and take great care of me. However, I can't afford to pay for workers' comp insurance, which means each PCA is only allowed 25.75 hours per week in my home.

I currently have 5 aides in my apartment all week, 3 different aides per day, which is more PCAs in my home than I would like to have. Having so many shifts per day means more chances for someone to call out and less consistency for me. If the state provided workers' comp then I would be able to give more hours to a smaller number of PCAs in my home, which would mean more stability, less stress for me and my husband, and better care for me.

I have a Hoyer lift that my PCAs use to help lift and move me, but what if God forbid one of the PCAs got hurt? Without workers' comp, how are we going to pay for that? If someone got hurt on the job it is my responsibility and I could get sued. If we had workers' comp my husband and I wouldn't have to stress about what would happen if one of my PCAs got hurt. Both I and my PCAs deserve to be protected.

The work that my PCAs do is just as important as the work that health care providers do in a facility, and deserves the same protections, as well as higher wages and benefits like Paid Time Off and holiday pay. All of these changes will not happen overnight but having the state provide workers' comp will be an excellent place to start.

Thank you,

Monique Varle Zmuda